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Child passenger safety legislation introduced

Lansing – Sen. Tom George, R-Texas Twp, and Sen. Michelle McManus, R-Lake Leelanau, are introducing legislation today to help better safeguard Michigan's children.

The bills would amend the Michigan vehicle code to require children between 40 and 80 pounds who are not more than 4 feet 9 inches to be seated in a manufacturer-certified booster seat and secured by a safety belt when riding in a motor vehicle.

"This is Child Passenger Safety Awareness week, so it is most fitting that we are recognizing the necessity of further protecting our children," Sen. George said.

"As a parent, the safety of my children is paramount to me," Sen. McManus said. "This legislation will make sure that all parents are properly securing their children in the car by using booster seats to ensure that seatbelts fit properly."

The bills would provide a waiver of fines, costs, or assessments against a person receiving a civil infraction for violation of this section if, before the appearance date on the citation, the court receives evidence of acquisition, purchase or rental of a child seat meeting the requirements.

According to the Michigan State Police there is growing evidence that serious injury to children is more preventable with booster seats which allow the safety belt to fit properly.

"As a state trooper, I know firsthand the injuries that children have sustained because they were not properly restrained," said Trooper Shelley Izzard. "Booster seats are critical to the safety of our children. We need this legislation to help educate the citizens of Michigan as to the best way to keep our children safe."

"We must be vigilant in protecting Michigan's most precious resource," Sen. George said. "Regular seat belts do not fit properly and simply do not provide the protection for smaller children that they would for an adult."

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